

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- [www.unine.ch/lettres](http://www.unine.ch/lettres)

### Séminaire I : Ancient Philosophy : Aristotelian Hylomorphism (2PH1317)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
<b>Pilier principal B A - philosophie</b>	<b>Cours: 2 ph</b>	Voir ci-dessous	4
<b>Pilier secondaire B A - philosophie</b>	<b>Cours: 2 ph</b>	Voir ci-dessous	4

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

#### Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Printemps

#### Equipe enseignante

Kathrin Koslicki

#### Contenu

In this seminar, we will examine Aristotle's doctrine of hylomorphism, according to which entities are compounds of matter (hulé) and form (morphé or eidos). After filling in some necessary background, we will examine Physics I-II, where Aristotle first introduces his distinction between matter and form, in the context of providing his analysis of change. Aristotle's main and most mature investigation into primary substance takes place in the middle books of the Metaphysics (Books VII-IX). These texts are among the most difficult ever written in the history of Western philosophy, and we will consult the secondary literature for help in trying to understand what Aristotle is up to in these central books of the Metaphysics. A further aim of this seminar is to put the ideas and views Aristotle develops in these texts into a contemporary context, to see why metaphysicians today are still finding them interesting, worthwhile and sometimes even plausible. The recent revival of Aristotelian metaphysics among contemporary philosophers gives us the opportunity to make contact with this current literature as well, as we work our way through the central books of Aristotle's Metaphysics and surrounding texts.

#### Forme de l'évaluation

The methods of assessment for this seminar are comprised of the following components:

- (1) Two short papers (50% of final grade, 25% each)
- (2) Short weekly comments (30% of final grade)
- (3) In-class presentations (10% of final grade)
- (4) Attendance and participation (10% of final grade)

(1) The two short papers should be approximately 4-5 pages long (~1000-1250 words). The first paper can be on any suitable topic relevant to the readings and materials discussed in class during the first half of the semester. The second paper can be on any suitable topic relevant to the readings and materials discussed in class during the second half of the semester. Guidelines and a detailed grading rubric with criteria of evaluation will be made available. Students will receive assistance in finding a suitable topic as well as feedback on a draft before handing in the final version of their papers. (2) The short weekly comments (max. 1 page) for each meeting should raise questions or objections concerning the readings discussed in the seminar during that week. Students are encouraged to bring up these questions or objections during class discussion. (3) Students will be asked to give an in-class presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes at least once, and possibly more than once, during the semester. The in-class presentation should ideally help students find a paper topic, although it is not required that the topic of the presentation will also become the topic of the paper. (4) Attendance and participation are expected and required. Students will receive high marks for participation, if they are successful at demonstrating their engagement with the material discussed in this seminar, e.g., by contributing to class discussions regularly and in a constructive way; by attending office hours or scheduling appointments; by communicating via email; etc. Work that is not submitted by the required deadline, without good cause, will not be accepted and will automatically result in a failing grade for that assessment.

Due Dates: The first short paper is due on April 15, 2020; the second short paper is due on July 15, 2021. Both papers will be returned to students with comments and a grade. If the grade is not satisfactory (below 4), students will have the opportunity to hand in a revised version of their papers by August 15, 2021.

Assessment criteria: level of preparedness; clarity of oral and written expression; specification of technical terms used; structure (e.g., plan, logical organization of ideas); ability to highlight key points; persuasiveness of arguments; originality and creativity of positions defended; speed of reflection during oral presentations.

Language of instruction: The language of instruction for this seminar will be English.

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### **Documentation**

- Bostock, David (1994): Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Books Z and H, translated with a commentary, Clarendon Aristotle Series, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK
- Brower, Jeffrey (2014): *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK
- Burnyeat, Myles (2001): *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta*, Mathesis Publications, Pittsburgh, PA
- Charles, David (2002): *Aristotle on Meaning and Essence*, Clarendon Press, New York, NY
- Koslicki, Kathrin (2018): *Form, Matter, Substance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK
- Ferejohn, Michael T. (2013): *Formal Causes: Definition, Explanation, and Primacy in Socratic and Aristotelian Thought*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY
- Feser, Edward (ed.) (2013): *Aristotle on Method and Metaphysics*, Palgrave/Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK
- Fine, Kit (1999): "Things and Their Parts", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 23, pp. 61-74
- Frede, Michael (1987): *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN
- Frede, Michael, and Patzig, Günther (1988): *Aristoteles Metaphysik Z, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Vols. 1 and 2, Verlag C. H. Beck, Munich, Germany
- Gill, Mary Louise (1989): *Aristotle on Substance: The Paradox of Unity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ
- Harte, Verity (2002): *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK
- Johnston, Mark (2006): "Hylomorphism", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 103, No. 12, pp. 652-698
- Loux, Michael J. (1991): *Primary Ousia: An Essay on Aristotle's Metaphysics Z and H*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY
- Lowe, E. J. (2006): *The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK
- Oderberg, David (2007): *Real Essentialism*, Routledge Taylor & Francis, New York, NY
- Peramatzis, Michail (2011): *Priority in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY
- Rea, Michael (2011): "Hylomorphism Reconditioned", *Philosophical Perspectives*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 341-358
- Scaltsas, Theodore, Charles, David and Gill, Mary Louise (eds.) (1994): *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK
- Tahko, Tuomas (ed.) (2012): *Contemporary Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK
- Witt, Charlotte (1989): *Substance and Essence in Aristotle: An Interpretation of Metaphysics VII-IX*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY
- Witt, Charlotte (2003): *Ways of Being: Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY

The readings for this course will be made available online.

### **Pré-requis**

None.

### **Forme de l'enseignement**

Seminar, 2 hours per week, Friday, 14:00-16:00, Spring semester.

### **Objectifs d'apprentissage**

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Au terme de la formation l'étudiant-e doit être capable de :

- Define key concepts and principles used in Aristotelian metaphysics, such as matter, form, potentiality, actuality, etc.
- Describe the main influences and connections between Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian metaphysics and other areas of philosophy as well as connected disciplines, such as the natural and social sciences, etc.
- Examine how philosophers apply key concepts and principles to central problems concerning Aristotle's distinction between matter and form.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments orally and in writing for the acceptance or rejection of arguments and theories regarding the Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism.
- Analyse the principal historical and contemporary theories concerning Aristotle's distinction between matter and form.
- Discuss central texts concerning the Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism.
- Recognise how prominent figures in Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian metaphysics are influenced by, and have influenced, their predecessors or successors.
- Identify the principal positions in Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian metaphysics.
- Work with other students to contribute to group projects.
- Write well-organized and well-reasoned argumentative papers on a particular text, problem, or position advanced in Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian metaphysics.